

LP. 160 a) Kechyi

726 Now some Monachi [Eastern Mono] had come
over the mountains: their chief had told them
648 to "go over and kill those people like birds."
252 While the Yokuts men were away, the Monachi
surrounded the women's camp. One man came
closer to spy. He saw the women cracking the
acorns with their teeth and thought they were
eating. He went back and reported this. Several
times he came close to spy and each time saw
the women putting the nuts to their mouths: he
"thought they just ate all day long."

726 Next morning the Yokuts men went out very
early to knock down more acorns. They found a
648 series of stakes, with feather bunches (so n:l)
tied to their tops, which had been set up by
the Monachi.⁴⁰ They knew the Monachi were near
by, so they returned to camp and sent the women
off. The women fled across the river [San
Joaquin], leaving everything behind. The men
went in pursuit of the Monachi. Their camp was
located, and the Monachi were found asleep.
Rushing in, the Yokuts killed all of them, save
one man who smeared himself with his comrades'
blood and pretended he was dead. Later on this
man went back to his village and reported
events to his chief. The chief was very angry;
he determined on revenge.

Soon after that a Yokuts was working for a
white man and was sent up into the mountains
with some hogs. Some Monachi lurking about on
this side of the ridge saw him; they came down
to him and asked him who he was. When it was
time for the Yokuts man to return to the valley,
his employer warned him not to make the trip
alone. But the man was anxious to get back
home and went anyway. The Monachi were am-
bushed along the way and killed the man and his
horse.

433 There was no mark of ownership on land or
trees or seed-areas, but a woman would verbally
designate certain trees or grass spots as hers
and would "growl" if some other woman took the
products therefrom ahead of her. Her com-
[578] plaints would be on the personal level, and
would not be taken to the chief under ordinary
circumstances. Sometimes arguments between
• [624] women did grow into family feuds, which the
chief attempted to control by counsel. There
was a tacit, traditional ownership among fami-
lies, and in the larger sense among tribes, of
desirable land and its concomitant hunting,
fishing, and seed-gathering assets. The family
"ownership" operated to the extent that a young
married woman continued to gather vegetable
products with her own mother, rather than with
her mother-in-law. This was regardless of
[428] matrilineal or patrilineal residence, and surely
led to inheritance of such plots, even though
inheritance was not defined in set terms by
any Yokuts people.

647 It is clear from the account given above,
222 that people from several tribes might be camped

⁴⁰The exact nature of these E.M. could not define: they
may be such stakes as those the Tachi informant, M.G., had
in mind when she described boundary markers (see Tachi,
Pt. I).

[P. 210 a] Chukchaws.

683 when the time for public avengement came, no shaman was immune.

683 Once there was a shaman of ill-repute who came to a celebration at Picayune. He was mean, 824 would kill a person without provocation. Other doctors thought of the evil things that man had 766 done, so they decided to kill him. He got a pain in his side, went home, and died. The people were afraid to bury him. They dug an extra deep grave at his own house, not in the regular burying-place. Such powerful whirlwinds arose they could scarcely handle him. It rained, thundered, and blew. When they got the body in the grave, they put large stones on top, but the whirlwind blew those rocks away "just like blasting." Finally they got the hole filled, put more rocks on top, and went home.

754 The activities of malicious shamans were curbed by fear of revenge. A family, believing 626 themselves to be the victim of deliberate ill-treatment from a certain shaman, could legiti- 683 mately seek to kill the man. This might be done by a member of the family or, in some cases, a man was hired to do it. Public opinion upheld the family when their suffering was known to be aggravated by a shaman's malice.

628 If a chief had a big family and they all started dying, he would think maybe it was a certain doctor who was killing them, said J.R. He didn't tell anyone. He secretly called a brave man, maybe two, not many. He told them that he had lost all his family and that he suspected a certain bad doctor of killing them. The doctor might live in some other community. The chief would have with him some money, perhaps valuable baskets, something worth fifteen to twenty-five dollars. He would say, "I am going to tell you, I want you. Now I tell you boys, I want you to go over to his place to-night. I will send a man over there to get the doctor and bring him where you are."

In the late afternoon, around five o'clock, the chief would send a man over to the shaman's house who, on some pretext, would get the shaman to come out to a prearranged spot. Without losing sight of him, the messenger went off a bit to find the killers who were to meet him. He said to them, "He is right there now. Are you ready? All right. Here he is." Then the hired men approached the shaman. These avengers had their bows, already charged with arrows, in their hands. When they were very close to their victim -- about four feet -- they shot directly at his heart. "That Indian doctor was done for." Then the men departed, leaving the corpse. The dead man's relatives came and took him away for burial. [Revenge by the shaman's family was not alluded to by any informant. Probably here, as elsewhere, the man's guilt was known to his relatives, so they would not attempt retaliation. -- A.H.O.]

756 Women shamans were known to the Chukchansi, and were evidently more common than among other

the life-for-a-life rule was the nearest approach to a definite law, and this was applied only when the opinion of chiefs and elders saw its justification. By what means, then, were peace and public satisfaction maintained? Largely by means of an influence which had no legal basis, the fear of sorcery. This factor in civil life worked for public good; it was an awe-inspiring force itself, and served as a tool for chiefs when used by them through their shamans. The fear of sorcery operated between any one individual and another. If, as we have said, the peace of a community depended largely upon the personal character of each person, the personal character in turn was determined or molded by belief in supernatural powers which could be turned against one. A man dared not cheat another at gambling or trading, commit adultery, or neglect any civil or ceremonial duty toward his neighbor, lest the offended person visit sickness or death upon him or some member of his family, either by his own power or that of a shaman hired for the purpose. On the other hand, a man could not take offense for no reason, and retaliate by this means unless completely justified, for the matter would eventually be aired before the chief. Thus sorcery as a deterrent of crime kept a balance of peace in everyday life.

This seems to leave shamans holding the whip hand. One tends to envisage the life of Yokuts and Western Mono as shadowed by the constant threat of witchcraft. It was; but this does not mean that an individual lived in a perpetual state of anxiety and dread. The idea of malevolent sorcery was a commonplace in their lives: one took care not to bring its force down upon oneself. But their attitude to it may be likened to our own to, say, bacteria, automobiles, or gas, dangers to which we are so accustomed that they are given little conscious thought though they unquestionably modify our behavior. And shamanism in native life was no less a necessity than these useful hazards of our own civilization. A doctor might be able to kill one, but at the same time he had the ability to cure sicknesses brought about by other agents such as Night, Springs, ghosts, or other supernatural creatures. It was hard to give up money, baskets, or a prized possession to him, but it was harder still to be sick unto death. And the majority of doctors were not malicious. It is only of bad shamans that informants tell their tragic tales, and these men were of course blamed for many misfortunes for which they were not responsible. A good shaman who found that his patient was not recovering would frankly say he had not the power, and suggest that another be called.

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181 If he met with one or two failures he gave up his practice entirely,
 756 or at least until he had strengthened his contact with the supernatural.
 181 Such a man was free of suspicion. The doctor who continued to cure
 754 after losing patients was the one to be feared for he was causing illness
 just to make money in curing, without regard for public welfare. But
 the doctor whose avidity led him to such extremes was done away with
 on slight evidence; he had but a tenuous hold on life. Hence the men
 who were willing to risk their lives in this manner for personal
 aggrandizement were more rare than informants' accounts would lead
 [756] us to think. To sum up, shamanism as a factor in political life acted
 626 as a deterrent upon crime, was a force which preserved as well as de-
 stroyed life, and its misuse was restrained by the threat of discovery
 and subsequent death.

182 Turning to the intrigues of chiefs and shamans, it will be seen
 622 that there was some justification for the alliance. A chief who hired
 756 a shaman to sicken a rich man who did not join in the expenses of a
 fandango or mourning ceremony was setting a public example at the
 same time that he was enriching himself. To the chief and to his
 shaman, who shared the money paid in fees by the sick man, it was
 unquestionably a matter of financial profit. But from the point of
 view of the public at large it was a fair punishment. Thus: a man
 of money who neglected or refused to bear his share of a public
 [577] expense was placing a heavier financial burden upon his fellow-
 citizens; furthermore, generosity was an ideal, and the man who
 failed to contribute his share was showing himself to be greedy, and
 hence received no sympathy if misfortune befell him. In the absence
 of any law or system of taxation, it behooved each citizen, especially
 those of wealth, to participate in the sharing of public expenses, lest
 he incur the displeasure of the chief and of the public, and sickness
 or death be visited upon him.

182 The chief, however, in his turn could not unrestrainedly make use
 622 of malevolent supernatural power. He was a public figure, and as
 such was open to censure. Though his position was acquired by in-
 heritance, his retention of it depended upon his conduct. Simple as
 was the civilization of Yokuts and Western Mono, upon the chief,
 as official executor, devolved all manner of responsibilities—and these
 were not easy. Take for example, the management of a mourning
 ceremony in which the chief's own village, other villages, and even
 other tribes were involved. The financial resources of all persons
 concerned had to be determined, and the intertribal exchange of

money and food so adjusted that there was no unexpected loss to any of the participants. These matters, together with the wishes of other chiefs, the bereaved families, and guest tribes had to be managed to the satisfaction of all persons involved. This in itself is not so difficult, save that it called for executive talents which every man might not possess.

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The greatest responsibility of a chief was the settlement of quarrels and granting permission to kill a supposed murderer. This responsibility was increased rather than lessened by the absence of codified legal system. A chief making an unsatisfactory decision could not excuse it on the ground that he was simply reading the law; he was personally responsible for the results of his counsel. To this end, he did not always depend upon his own judgment but sought the opinion of another chief or of respected elders. The hearing of cases did not take place publicly, but in or before the chief's house. This privacy did not matter, for a man who left dissatisfied aired his grievance to his neighbors. The community was small: there was little chance for secrecy, what one man knew, everybody knew. Lacking newspapers, gossip was rife. Popular sentiment turned against the chief who gave unfair decisions, or was suspected of self-aggrandizement. Such a man was not deposed from office, but gradually lost prestige. He was ignored in favor of another chief. If necessary, a new chief could be selected from among possible heirs, as a brother, or son, or even a cousin. Such a drastic procedure was rare, unless the incumbent were insensible. The chief, holding the highest place of respect in the community, would not care to lose it. Loss of respect, loss of prestige, in turn meant loss of wealth, a combination of disasters which no normal man wished to bring upon himself. The intriguing chief could and did hold office, but his selfish enterprises were carried on in secrecy and curbed by public opinion.

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The foregoing discussion has attempted to demonstrate the factors in the political system of Yokuts and Western Mono culture whereby orderly social activity was maintained. The activities of its citizens were at once protected and restrained by two forces, one, based upon legality, the traditional authority vested in the chief; the other, based upon belief in sorcery, the occult power wielded largely by shamans. Chiefs and shamans, who sometimes combined these two forces in intrigue were in turn restrained in their activities by the threat of loss of prestige, and of untimely death.

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2. In the first part of this paper the elements of Yokuts and Western Mono political life were dealt with in a purely descriptive manner. These elements have just been viewed as functioning parts of a working social system. They are now to be considered as functioning parts in their particular cultural mechanism. By cultural mechanism I mean the cooperation of elements within a culture, which, once established, exercise a force of their own that makes the cultural conformation persist as it is or trend in a certain direction. This phenomenon is fundamentally psychological and may be expressed in terms of habit, association of ideas, and conditioned behavior. But knowing this to be true, the cultural mechanism may be dealt with as such in its own sphere without translation into psychological terms, just as psychological processes may be considered without reduction to physiological terms. Granted that for psychological reasons the mental content of an individual is furnished by his surroundings we can turn to features in the milieu, in this case those of political life, and see them as coherent, interrelating parts of the cultural mechanism. In the situation under consideration we have the following concepts as factors in Yokuts-Western Mono political life: (1) on the side of the supernatural, a belief in Eagle as creator-in-chief of a primordial world inhabited by superhuman, superanimal creatures, a belief that these creatures exercise a power over present-day humans and their activities, that their power can be propitiated for benevolent and malevolent purposes, and that certain individuals (shamans) have particular control over this supernatural power; (2) on the social side, a totemic lineage system, a chief and a winatum as legal officials, the control of chiefs over ceremonial activities, class equality, economic ease, and generosity as an ideal. Negative elements will be mentioned as we discuss the interplay of the above factors.

[773] As concepts in the system of thought (behavior) of any Yokuts or Western Mono the above factors are interrelated in a variety of ways. Thus: (1) Eagle is believed to be the supreme creator-chief. This belief is expressed in a series of tales which contain tribal lore, present the facts of history as these are believed to be, and at the same time show the precedent for the established social system with eagle as chief, dove as winatum, owl as shaman, and so on. (2) A totemic lineage system determined the kin group: each person was born into a family which had an animal or bird as its particular symbol; this association had tangible expression in the daily acts of the person, he refrained from killing or eating the animal, he prayed to it,

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dreamed of it if he wanted its protection and aid, and, during ceremonials he wore a paint-pattern representing its appearance. Furthermore, if he belonged to a certain lineage, eagle, dove, bear, snake, or coyote, he had certain functions to perform which were his prerogatives. It will be seen that these factors and their interplay made up the chief's position: Eagle was chief; a person with eagle totem should be chief; the totem was derived from lineage membership; lineage membership was expressed in a number of private and ceremonial acts. This series of interrelating factors fortified each other's persistence in the cultural mechanism. To put it differently, if the chief as an institution were regarded as unsatisfactory, and a conscious desire for a change sprang into existence, the change could not be made without flying in the face of established concepts expressed in other associations, as that of Eagle as chief in mythology and ritualistic practices, or of totem with lineage which occurred in every family, or of function with totem and lineage which operated not only in the case of eagle-chief but was a fundamental factor in ceremonial activities, as the bear, snake, beaver, and coyote dances. Whatever is said here in regard to the chief in his position is equally true for the winatum.

The shaman's place in society was the result of some of the same concepts recombined with others. The lineage factor did not enter in his case. The concept expressed in mythology of Owl as a prehistoric shaman, plus the whole "constellation of ideas" surrounding the supernatural world and its relation to the real world, gave the shaman his place. Thus: the supernatural world was accessible through dream experiences; any individual might try to establish contact with it; some persons had more ability to do this than others; the more frequent the contact the more supernatural power was acquired; a few individuals accumulated so much power that they could use it to aid or injure others; such men made their livelihood by using this power, and these were shamans. The human organism being what it is, sickness and death attack it; these being undesirable states and attributable to supernatural causes such as the illwill of Eagle, Ghosts, Night, Springs, or Lightning, the shaman as a skilled practitioner with supernatural forces must be called upon to relieve them. Dangerous as an individual doctor might be, the institution of shamanism had to be endured; to do away with it would be unthinkable in the Yokuts-Mono system of thought. The fact that the supernatural world was available to any one, and that the average citizen sought and had dream experiences, simply strengthened extant con-

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182 ceptions of shamanism and the supernatural. There could be no doubt
 756 as to the shaman's experiences, since every one had them in milder
 or less frequent forms. The mysteries of shamanistic tricks may have
 been doubted by a skeptic or two, but the public shamans' contest was
 ocular evidence of their powers to kill and to revive. By such demon-
 strations was popular belief maintained and fortified.

182 The lack of codified law was related, I think, to two different
 626 factors, an easy subsistence and generosity as an ideal. These two
 671 factors themselves may have been mutually interactive. Before white
 262 intrusion, game, acorns, seeds, and tule root formed an abundant food
 supply in the San Joaquin valley; there are no famine tales from this
 area. It would seem that this condition may account for the lack of
 definite property areas. There was no need to set up a boundary if
 there were nothing of special value to protect. If a food shortage had
 occurred, or an unexpected invasion taken place, competition for
 acorn, seed, or game areas would have stimulated or necessitated prop-
 erty ownership. Besides the lack of property laws, the custom of
 [574 giving food to visitors, of returning value for value if a present were
 431 received, reduced the chances for theft, against which a formal law
 might have been established. Viewed from another angle these cul-
 tural habits may be regarded as laws; they were such in effect, but
 were not verbally formulated. From the point of view of their own
 [431 culture the giving of food at any time, the giving of gifts, and
 especially the casting away of both at the annual mourning ceremony,
 were customs of courtesy expressing the ideal of generosity. Equality
 [562 of rank among the people at large, that is, the absence of a class
 system, expressed the nullity of codified social law.

182 The lack of clearly defined concepts in Yokuts-Western Mono life
 773 may itself be regarded as a cultural form, an expression of thought
 829 habits. There existed a coherent system of thought which appeared
 in their mythology, their social system, and their ceremonial life.
 But the system was not ramified by specific ideas; thus, Eagle created
 the world and flew off, but whether he flew north, south, east, or west
 is of no moment to the Yokuts mind. He went above say some, or
 [587 possibly to the east, another says to the west. That Eagle and all his
 former companions still exist is attested by the dream experiences of
 dozens of individuals; it doesn't matter where they are. The same
 182 laxity of thought prevails in the legal system: a chief makes a decision
 829 in a quarrel, but his next decision may or may not follow the prece-
 dent set in the former case. The respected elders of a village exercise